

Political Theory In Hungary After the Regime Change¹

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Abstract

The article offers an overview of the development political theory in Hungary in the past quarter of a century. It is written from a personal perspective, yet it is intended to be impartial and exhaustive. It follows a chronological order and puts the issue into a political and institutional context, with a special emphasis on the regime change that took place between 1988-90. Wherever necessary, the historical antecedents and intellectual traditions of contemporary Hungarian political theorising will be reflected on. Political theory itself will be discussed as being composed of three main branches, namely, empirical, analytical and normative theories. The overall conclusion will be that the predominantly liberal atmosphere of the 1990es was gradually replaced by a more conservative one, and that, strongly related to both the international tendencies and the domestic political developments, the so called agonistic interpretation of politics in general and of democracy in particular has become the mainstream approach in Hungarian political theory.

Keywords: Carl Schmitt, Hungary, Political theory, Regime change

1. Introduction

My purpose is to offer an overview of political theory in Hungary in the past quarter of a century. The country is relatively small and its language is rather forbidding to foreigners. However, opening a window on it in terms of political theory might be interesting not only in and for itself but also as a case study of the challenges political theory must face in communities that are both closed (to foreigners) and wholly integrated in the Western culture (as natives think), and that have been affected by profound historical changes.² Although I do not think that political theory “should” either guide (and criticise) or track down (and explain) such political changes, it is a natural expectation that theoretical reflection turns out to have been affected by them and that especially during rapid changes and a loss of clear normative orientation, theories may be directly called for and in by those actively forming the political processes, emerging institutions and generally, the constitutional and legal framework of a country. I shall thus try to pay due attention to these interactions and the forms of mutual influence. However, my focal point will be the development of political theory as a (sub)discipline.

I shall follow a chronological order, beginning with the antecedents of the regime change in terms of political theory, turning to the long moment of the change itself, and then taking stock with the past two decades, reflecting on changes of the institutional and political context when and where it seems relevant. However, although my overview is meant to cover twenty-five-thirty years but wherever and inasmuch as it is necessary to reflect on traditions, these brief reflections will not be spared. Even though the regime change was indeed a dramatic turn in and for the freedom of thinking, talking, and

writing, without external and internal(ised) constraints, making truly independent political thinking possible, a complete discontinuity, an absolutely new beginning would be a very counter-intuitive hypothesis. Concepts, problems, issues pertinent to “scientific socialism” were indeed rapidly replaced by those of democracy and of a free and sovereign polity, as I shall show, and of course there was no way back to the pre-war, elitist but constitutional authoritarianism colored with an old style liberalism and some sincere democratic developments.³ However, some parts of political theory, especially its normative and historical research areas, much as in any other Western commonwealth, are sensitive to their own traditions and I shall refer to them when and where necessary.

It is also necessary to remember that political theory, as any other field of science, is done in concrete academic and general institutional settings where it often has to compete for the resources, including not only money but students and prestige as well; and that political theory is especially vulnerable to misinterpretations and political abuse. Whenever it seems important, I shall reflect on these problems, too.

Let me add some methodological qualifications and disclaimers here. First, I do not intend to tell in what political theory consists, where its borders lie, whether it belongs to philosophy or to political science, whether it can be pursued in a purely formal way or always with reference to some historical, political, cultural, whatever context. I will use a classification that I hope is as uncontroversial as possible. This includes three classes: (i) the empirical, (ii) the analytic, and (iii) the normative approaches. Second, “in Hungary” means political theory being done within and for the political community of Hungary. Scholars of Hungarian origin but working in a different political culture will be covered only insofar as they have influenced the scholarship of their native country, that is, as any other relevant author from the international community. (Naturally, many of them have preserved a distinctive interest in their native country.)⁴ Thirdly, and finally, this overview is not objective in the sense of being supported by numbers and calculations. There are no exact data, say, of the kind impact factors are measured today. Building up such a background would require an immense research of which I am not capable now. Hence, the relevance of the overview is constrained. Its credibility stems from my personal involvement, experience, and the suggestions and recommendations of those who read the paper and that I have all taken into account when completing this overview.

2. Pre-Regime Change Antecedents

Needless to say that the official Marxism-Leninism, prevalent and obligatory in the Soviet countries, did not recognize the scientific or philosophical autonomy of any kind of political thinking. It was “scientific socialism,” taught at universities by special departments, that was meant to cover problems related to the political and institutional order and identified by the party leadership, always according to the precepts of The Doctrine. Notwithstanding the prominence of the official doctrine, however, more independent thinking began relatively early in time, if not at those departments but in other institutions and within opposition circles.

First, from the late sixties onwards, leftist criticism of Marxism has slowly taken ground. Most critiques, especially those that directly challenged the political core of

Marxism, were suppressed and published only either abroad or in a *samisdat* form. Some, especially those that attacked the economic doctrine of socialism, were sometimes tolerated, perhaps due to the general reforming atmosphere. Especially interesting was Tibor Liska's case who argued openly for a kind of fully competitive, enterpreneurian economy, yet preserving fundamental equality in terms of opportunities to everybody, anticipating, in effect, a contemporary version of luck egalitarianism (Bársony 1982). Janos Kornai's devastating critique of the socialist economy, with the conclusion that it was inherently inefficient and unsustainable, was technical enough to pass the censorship yet made a tremendous impact on political economics afterwards.⁵ *Samisdat* publications and books published by the emigration and other dissidents abroad could of course exert only a very limited impact on the intellectual life and found their way back to home and the legal sphere after the regime change.⁶

Second, after Gorbachev had launched the *perestroika*, party and government institutes began to consider widening the legitimacy basis of the regime along more democratic principles, though not by allowing a multi-party system but by finding other institutional ways to articulate, channel and integrate "genuine" (that is, not directly political, and hence considered being unsubversive) social interests. A new constitution was being discussed, if only in party and government offices. There was a demand for legal theorists but certain independent political scientist (not bound by party discipline) could also propose general political reforms. I suggest, therefore, that immediately prior to the regime change (the exact date of which is, of course, indeterminable) thinking in terms of legitimacy, democracy, the inherent plurality of interests, autonomy, the constitutional protection of the private sphere and individual rights had already been on the wake, and had made researching and teaching "scientific socialism" an obsolete business. Those deeply involved in the reform zeal did not make precise distinctions between the different compartments, responsibilities and competences of political theory. Democracy and its types were not discussed, only "democratisation." There was much talk about interests, yet little about values. Grandiose schemes of institutional reform were put on table, that were quickly adjusted to "political realities," yet seldom confronted with social reality and historical experiences. Long-forgotten and/or forbidden authors of the early twenties (such as Bukharin or Gramsci) were discovered but quickly forgotten again. Public discussions of reform were still seriously restricted. There was a dizzy and quickly changing atmosphere, a general excitement and expectation of new and new things to happen, which made a more time-demanding and consuming theoretical research practically impossible.

As a third source of political theory in Hungary I must name a single person. This was István Bibó, the greatest authority on the Left, yet for his moral standing in 1956 also held in high esteem by the Right. For as a member of the Imre Nagy Cabinet he was the only minister in Parliament on duty when the Soviets arrived. Later he was imprisoned for some years but essentially silenced for the remainder of his life.

Bibó, whose political and intellectual formation began in the pre-war era, and who joined the leftist-agrarian critics of the Horthy regime, did not develop a consistent political theory. Rather, he took up various issues in his oeuvre, many of which reflect on actual political problems yet always with a keen theoretical sense.⁷ Put together, they form a characteristically Bibóian way of thinking. The perhaps most significant

component of it is a very strong pro-democratic cornerstone. His most frequently cited and today proverbial statement is that 'to be a democrat amounts to not being afraid' (originally he meant not fearing the opponent, yet many interpretations take this to allude to a general civic courage). His view of democracy was both progressivist and optimist, clearly influenced by the Enlightenment and generally, the various emancipation movements; but also conservative due to its concrete, particular, institutional approach. Bibó wrote his dissertation in legal theory, where he interpreted freedom strictly in terms of rights and norms. He held socialist-egalitarian views on capitalism (advocating collectivisation and redistribution of property), liberal views on the separation of state and social powers, and conservative-socialist views on social progress, guided revolution, and the need to reform society from above, by a strong elite. And he had an acute historical sense as well, interpreting the modern history of Hungary, but also of Central-Europe, including Germany, in terms of collective psychosis, surviving cultural and political patterns shaped by historical experiences – again, a typically conservative approach. His most famous categories by which he tried to explain many failures of modern Hungary are the predominance of, and pernicious opposition between, “overstrained essence-visionaries” and “fake realists” in Hungarian politics. He condemned visionaries for being incapable of taking politics seriously and for ignoring practical issues and feasible solutions; and fake realists for being too much prepared for accepting immoral compromises and thereby enhancing general corruption. Despite being a leftist, he was also a staunch opponent of Marxism and its historical materialist doctrine.

It is no wonder that such an extremely motley version of normative and empirical political theory was both a source of inspiration to very different political tastes, and a way of thinking that as such could not be continued. What I take to be his greatest achievement for political theory and science is to show that it is possible to think of politics in its own terms, that is, not as a subfield of economics, moral philosophy, or philosophy of history. His works had provided a fertile ground for both normative and analytical political theory later.

The fourth source of political theory was the literature on national identity. This may appear somewhat odd from a contemporary Western eye, yet it also has Western counterparts, in fact, a very rich tradition and inspiration to Central and Eastern Europeans. Herder, Fichte; Barrès, Maurras; Ortega, Unamuno belong to the classics; Baudrillard, Scruton, A. Bloom are contemporary examples of thinking in terms of how a political community, a nation exists, what its characteristics are, what intellectual, moral, political influences shape its identity, how the democratic sovereign as an artificial person looks like as a natural entity. Much of this literature is written in essayistic and other literary forms, academic journals rarely publish such papers but often discuss them. But both analytical and normative political theory deals with such problems, too, though of course in more rigorously defined terms. The former discusses questions of loyalty, political obligation, national identity, cultural and political nations; whereas the latter is concerned with cosmopolitanism, republicanism, democratic patriotism and cultural/political/ethnic nationalism.

The specifically Central and Eastern European (including Russia) questions have ever been where “we belong to” and whether “we” have our own historical way to go or

should/could, finally, join “the West.” Actually, Bibó himself was very much interested in this question, firmly believing that there have been serious derailments in the history of Central European nations but a return to the mainstream Western European history has always been possible. This was, essentially, the consensus among Hungarian conservatives and liberals of the 19th century. It was basically from the late 19th century on, influenced by German and French philosophy (see the names above), that some conservatives diverted from this consensus and began to believe in a more autonomous history of Hungary (hence the term “Hungarianness,” the content of which has ever been a subject of bitter political and literary debates). Radical liberals and socialists, however, become more and more doctrinaire in defending the supremacy of the West and were (and are) often called “alien-hearted” people by radical conservatives and nationalists.

Strangely but logically, the Kádár-regime could build on both traditions: its socialist principles and Marxist-Leninist doctrine committed it to the standard humanist-progressivist vision of mankind, whereas its loyalty to the Soviet Union helped certain rightist-conservative hostilities towards the West to survive. Its decline was marked by the resurgence of pro-Western tradition. Significantly for the emergent political theory, besides the Bibóian psycho-structural approach, historical non-Marxist structuralism also heavily influenced the discussion. It was especially the historian Jenő Szűcs’s short but very dense analysis of the “three historical regions of Europe” that was read widely (Szűcs 1983). Szűcs, under the influence of Bibó, the Weberian pre-war social historian István Hajnal, and the French Annalists, introduced and used institutional and structural terms in explaining the logic of development in each region, including power, state, top-down and bottom-up social organising, separation of institutional competences, the organic evolution of differentiating private and public spheres, society and state (but not an independent economy) and so on. This was, in effect, a precious contribution to the vocabulary of an autonomous political theory as well.

Observers of contemporary Hungarian domestic politics may note that this ideological-normative aspect of political theory has become very strong again, with the current government and its head repeatedly expressing its/his reservations about Western values (actually, disvalues) and preferring certain (randomly selected) Eastern societies. The consensus about the supremacy of the Western-liberal model that was so strong prior and during the regime change is clearly over. This rhetorical, in some ways practical, and perhaps increasingly political turn toward the East has strong historical-ideological roots and hence deep reverberations in Hungarian society.

Fifthly and finally, the work of historians of ideas and persons cannot be underestimated, either. Classics of Hungarian liberals and conservatives of the 19th century had never been prohibited to read, though they had never been a robust part of university education. Total censorship was basically restricted to rightists authors of the 20th century, including not only straightforward fascists but also conservatives. Writings of other non-Marxist but leftist authors such as Oscar Jászi (a radical socialist, yet critic of Marxism) were published but selectively. From the mid-eighties, however, censorship was gradually eased and old-forgotten authors re-appeared both by their own right (new editions of old works) and as subjects of new monographs. There was an increasing

awareness of the very rich and pluralist intellectual life of pre-war Hungary where various normative political conceptions were published and discussed.⁸

3. Regime Change

Let me return first to the institutional background of political theory during the regime change. Unlike in East Germany, what happened in Hungary and also elsewhere in the former Eastern bloc was that the departments of “scientific socialism” were not dissolved but transformed into departments and institutes of political science, taught often by the same staff. This explains, from a sociological and psychological point of view, the initial mistrust towards political science within the educated elite and the new, emerging and victorious anticommunist parties and governments (Ehrhart 1998). It should also be added that the very early beginning of a highly combative political culture in Hungary made partisanship almost inevitable among political theorists as well: many of them were actively engaged in public debates, and became figures identified as either openly leftist or rightist. This has further contributed to the mistrust towards political theory (but also political science generally) as a serious kind of science by the political, intellectual and media elites.

Yet the more solid results and achievements of autonomous political thinking enumerated above helped political science and theory to take roots within the academic world. The first wave of analytical and normative theories and conceptions was overwhelmingly neo-Marxist, revisionist and post-Marxist/critical. The Polish political sociologist J. Wiatr (1998), the Italian political philosopher A. Gramsci, as well as N. Poulantzas, E. Miliband, Th. Skocpol, S. Lukes, V. Bunce, A. Giddens, Ph. C. Schmitter, R. Dahrendorf, C. Offe and others quickly replaced the canonical classics of Marxism. On the purely normative level, J. Habermas’s influence was initially very robust. His books were translated and taught extensively. In empirical theory, it was mainly neocorporativism and elitism that belonged to this wave. Interestingly, on the one hand, while corporativism was once a markedly conservative idea, its new edition influenced mainly the leftist theory of the state. The markedly peaceful, elitist, consensual, negotiated nature of the Hungarian transition (in Rudolf Tőkés’ term, the negotiated revolution) looked like the continuation (or merely acceleration) of the reforms that began in the mid-eighties and with which the former technicist-pragmatist but decidedly leftist elite identified itself.

On the other hand, however, elitism that was once a characteristically leftist-critical theory, has been embraced and increasingly endorsed by many conservative essayists in Hungary. The reason is the negative evaluation of the same story: the “negotiated revolution” was not a revolution at all. The continuation thesis should indeed be taken seriously but this makes matters even worse. There was no regime change at all, only the facade was repainted. The Right has interpreted (first the far right, today the middle right, too) the change as a spurious and hypocritical one, with the old elite successfully preserving its power and influence, and hence a general normative-democratic legitimacy crisis was diagnosed and a radical, truly “anticommunist”-antielitist revolution has been called for. Whether it did happen in 2010 with the Fidesz winning the elections by a two-third majority, is a question for a political discourse.

Functionalism was also initially popular, though its very technical concepts and terms proved rather inefficient to wage such political wars. P. Bourdieu's terminology (symbolic power, forms of capital) proved more useful and was duly exploited.⁹ Less directly critical of the new political elite and the new political order was the application of M. Foucault's ideas and his conception of power to the interpretation of the history of modern Hungary and modernity in general.¹⁰

Another major, though often neglected or underestimated feature of the regime change and its immediate aftermath was the incredibly short time of translating and publishing previously unknown classics, ancients and moderns alike. It should be noted first, however, that even during the Communist era, the older classics such as Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Bodin, Rousseau, Tocqueville, Mill, Kant were more or less available (sometimes in shortened editions). Others were partly translated (Augustine, Scholastics, Renaissance thinkers, Scottish enlightenment philosophers, Nietzsche). After 1989 a number of others such as Burke, Madison and other American Founders, Constant, Guizot, etc. were added, the shortened versions of other works were published fully, classic monographs (on Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Montesquieu, etc. by Q. Skinner, R. Tuck, J. Dunn, J. Shklar, respectively) were translated, and the modern classics, from Carl Schmitt to Karl Popper, from Leo Strauss to M. Oakeshott, from I. Berlin to F. A. Hayek, from John Rawls to Charles Taylor, to name but a few, were also rapidly translated, introduced, explained, discussed and inserted into university curricula. Further, valuable selections of classic essays on liberalism and conservatism, communitarianism and nationalism, as well as encyclopedias and summaries of the history of political thought, were also added to the libraries.¹¹

Finally, there had been some relevant original scholarship done on classic authors even before the regime change. I do not only mean non-dogmatic Marx-research but the exploration of the anarchist tradition, the thinkers of the French enlightenment (Mária Ludassy), 17-18 century British political thinking (László Kontler, Ferenc Horkay-Hörcher, Balázs Trencsényi): this research was especially strong because of the international success and influence of the late István Hont who began his career as a historian of ideas in Hungary and helped new generations of historians from Cambridge to find their route to the international arena. On further developments in the field of the history of political thought see below.

4. The Development of Political Theory After the Regime Change

The foundations of autonomous political thinking having been thus laid down by translations, summaries, reviews, discussions, interpretations and some original work during the early nineties, the later phase of the development of political theory can be characterised by the growing awareness of the relative independence of its distinct compartments. As I indicated in the introduction, without making very substantial methodological claims, I shall distinguish between three major subfields of political theory and track each within the Hungarian context.

4.1. Empirical theories

This title might appear as a contradiction in terms inasmuch as theory and empirical research are often sharply distinguished, though, of course, considered to be in need of one another. Theory is based on empirical findings and empirical research is guided by theory. The point is, however, that political science as social science has its own characteristic, time-honored, tradition-supported questions and issues that have become focal points of both empirical research and pure theorising. What I have in mind is (i) the theory of democracy (classical, deliberative, leader types); (ii) theories of accountability, representation, mandating; (iii) theories of leadership, governing, decision making; (iv) theories of international relations; (v) theories of institutions, parties, movements, political systems and the state on supranational, national, subnational and local levels; (vi) discourse theory; (vii) theories of political sociology (recruitment of the political class, elite building and behaviour, voter behaviour, campaign studies, media and communication researches); (viii) formal models of voting and coalition forming; (ix) political economy; and (x) the contextualist school of the history of political thought and the study of political ideologies. As I said, these theories are rarely discussed in themselves but usually appear in empirical researches, contributing to the advancement of the respective subfield of political science. In this sense these theories may be considered as parts of the respective subfield and not part of political theory *as* a subfield of political science itself, with the possible exception of some purely theoretical, argumentative, or typological conceptions. However, these can perhaps be subsumed under another rubric (analytical and/or normative political theory). But such problems should not worry us here, since, to repeat, my purpose is largely taking stock with the output in the broadest possible sense. Let me thus expand on each subfield very briefly.

It may surprise a foreign reader to read that in an emerging democracy such as Hungary, with such an inspiring approach to democracy as Bibó's, theorising about democracy does not really flourish.¹² Compared to the state of the art as represented by the leading international journals, there has been almost no discussion about deliberative democracy and generally, on the meaning and context of democracy. It was only after the millenium that the concept of leader democracy has stirred up some interest, not unrelated to the growing influence of Carl Schmitt (more on that later) and the no less spectacular rise of Viktor Orbán on the political Right that was partly mirrored by the strong personality of Ferenc Gyurcsány, the once-leader of the Socialist Party.¹³ Again, partly as a result of the decidedly combative nature of Hungarian domestic politics, the consensual theories of democracy have been largely neglected and the agonistic character of politics has been more widely accepted in political theory.

Problems of political representation and accountability, as well as of leadership and governing have become topics of systematic research only recently. There is an ongoing research, related to similar international efforts, to build, classify and analyse political-electoral promises, and even more recently, a leadership research has also been launched in the Institute of Political Science of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, that has gradually become the strongest foothold of academic political science.¹⁴ Theories of international relations, again, have duly become parts of the university education, about independent research being done in this field I have got only scarce knowledge.

More well-developed is the area of party research, again, for reasons of its more direct political urgency. Parties are always keenly interested in their electorate and are willing to spend on such researches, hence a significant amount of data has been quickly assembled and developed ever since the first elections. The principal question is, as I think in every emerging democracy, to conceptualise and analyse the effects of voters' preferences on the electoral system and the behaviour of the parties and vice versa.¹⁵

Analysing the continuously changing institutional system (government institutions, independent institutions, local governments) and the no less rapidly changing arena of political movements requires constant attention. Keeping record of them is a heavy task and there remains little room and energy to formalise and theorise on them, although the lessons of international debates on models of government, governance and good governing have been adapted and discussed in Hungary, too.¹⁶

Discourse theorists, however, established themselves as a school quite early and have produced translations (e.g. works of Koselleck), valuable selections of essays and a remarkable amount of independent research. They are thus perhaps the most consciously self-constructing school in political theory in Hungary. They must face the usual barrier to the international arena, namely, the limited accessibility of Hungarian domestic politics to foreigners which they study according to the precepts and ideas of discourse analysis.¹⁷

Political sociology and its various subfields are, as far as I can judge, mostly done by empirical researchers, except perhaps for network research which is supported and done by young scholars with a keen theoretical sense. They have done invaluable work by building up data bases (such as about the recruitment and career paths of politicians) and analysing them according to the received standards.¹⁸ The perhaps most interesting research results have been to control for the elitist theories about the regime change: was that really only a conversion of political capital into economic and social ones? How is the new capitalist Hungarian economy organised? What role does foreign capital play in building up regional and local networks?

Game theory and its various applications such as coalition forming and committee voting are still relatively rare, partly due to the regrettable gaps in academic teaching of formal theories and models to political science students.

Studying political economy has had perhaps the strongest roots in empirical political theory in Hungary. The perhaps most reknown examples are Károly Polányi's theory of economic transformation and Kornai's theory of shortage economy. In the field of comparative system analysis, Mária Csanádi's researches on the Hungarian, other East European, and the Chinese state and party system have earned international attention.¹⁹ During the first years of the transition, Hungary looked an interesting and unique case and some monographs and theories have been developed out of analysing it. There are other internationally established scholars in this field.²⁰ However, a generational gap evolved in the nineties, due to some extent of talented economists having been absorbed rapidly by the new market economy, and it is only very recently that theories of international political economy have become subjects of study by young political economists.

I subsume the contextualist school of the history of political thinking to this chapter. Scholars working on authors of the great Western canon have already been

mentioned. As far as the history of political thinking in Hungary is concerned, the first thing to note is the lack of a solid philosophical tradition in which political philosophy could have been embedded. Of course, right from the early 18th century there was a growing awareness of the great French, German and English authors (especially Montesquieu, Rousseau, Herder, Locke, Burke: generally those whose ideas could be cited and interpreted in defense of public – and national – liberty against the Crown and the absolutist state). However, it was only from the 1840ies that different political ideologies were distinguished and began their career. No wonder that contextualism, that emphasises the historical embeddedness of a given ideological, political position and considers it untieable from the historical context, is the more persuasive position. Add to this the turbulences of history in Central Europe and one can doubt that there is much sense in talking about coherent liberal or conservative thinking in Hungary. Thus, given the huge differences of political, economic, social, and cultural contexts of the 19th and 20th century and the lack of a philosophical background, many historians of political thought reject the idea of diachronically coherent political philosophical positions. The doyen of the historians of Hungarian political thinking, István Schlett, emphasises further that political thinking is different from political philosophical thinking: the latter may be missing, the former can still be robust and more relevant for political science. It is the political discussions of the day, and the thinking of those who actively shape politics, that is, of political actors that should be studied by scholars in the first place.

Finally, and again somewhat strangely, the study of political ideologies as they appear in a contemporary pluralist society and democratic political order, is marginal, too.²¹ Due to the spectacular rise of the extreme Right in the past few years, there is a growing interest in the meaning of radicalism, populism, extremism; and there is an increasing awareness of the importance of ideas and values as they appear in politics and influence politicians' and voters' choices, yet the bulk of the literature on political ideologies, worldviews, systems of ideas is either partisan or purely normative. Liberals try to cope with liberalism, conservatives with conservatism, socialists with socialism either critically (criticising the others), or defending them. I shall return to them. But there is precious little empirical research being done *how* these positions have evolved, changed, and are related to one another in the ongoing political and philosophical debates.²²

4.2. Analytical theories

This subfield of political theory is defined by analytical, conceptual, and phenomenological approaches to problems of politics that appear on a highly abstract level. Fundamental principles, values, and relations of politics are discussed here that in turn may and do inspire empirical researches as well.

A classic problem discussed by analytical theorists was *legimitation*. As I explained in the introduction, the Hungarian transition was characterised by the relative weakness of the democratic opposition that rejected the legitimacy of the Kádár-regime but had to admit that the Communists, and especially Kádár himself, could have easily won even a completely free elections as late as, say, the mid-eighties. This was indeed a perplexing problem and ever since the “negotiated revolution” of 1989 and the new constitution

that was constructed step-by-step-wise and never legitimised for instance by a popular referendum, the legitimacy of the political order had been an open question.²³ Since the adoption of the Basic Law in 2011 that replaced the old constitution was also a unilateral action of the governing coalition, the problem of legitimacy of the constitution has not disappeared. Yet I must acknowledge that despite the urgency of the problem, Hungarian political theorists have shown relatively little attention to it, and if yes, more in the nineties (Arato 2000).

Trust, on the contrary, belongs today to the most widely discussed issues not only in political science but also economics and sociology. It is fashionable internationally as well, and well-supported by ongoing empirical research (comparative surveys). On the whole, the Hungarian society is considered to be low in general trust and strong in family trust. This is regarded as providing for a particularly unfriendly environment for both democracy, and especially consensus-oriented, democracy; and for market economy where competition and cooperation are considered to be equally important.

Sovereignty is usually discussed under the influence of Schmitt, once again, whereas *power* appears most frequently in its Foucauldian and Bourdieuan interpretation. Issues of *human rights*, *authority*, *human dignity*, *political obligation* and *constitutionalism* are mainly debated among legal philosophers.²⁴ Concepts of H. L. A. Hart, R. Dworkin, J. Raz and others have been introduced and constructively discussed more in legal journals and less in political ones. Classical *natural right* theories are even less known and cited.²⁵ This is somewhat odd and regrettable because the Hungarian Constitutional Court has been one of the most active and powerful institutions of its kind, and developed a very robust interpretation of the old constitution influenced by concepts of natural right and human dignity. Its decisions and rulings formed the political landscape of Hungary substantially, this is why I consider the negligence of its philosophy by political theorists somewhat strange.

Lastly and perhaps most importantly, I take the study of *the political* as the basic relation or quality of any politically existing human community to be the number one problem of analytical political theory. Arguably, the two most significant conceptions of the problem of what political existence entails are those of Carl Schmitt and Hannah Arendt. Whereas Schmitt's theory rests on enmity and agonism, Arendt's idea is the opposite: in her view, to exist politically amounts to be able to act in concert, where no public enemy, or foe, is existentially or conceptually required or presupposed. On the whole, as far as I can see, and again probably related to the predominantly agonistic style and reality of Hungarian politics, Arendt's influence has been smaller than Schmitt's, though Arendt herself devoted an important essay to the Hungarian Revolution in 1956 that she regarded to be an important historical evidence for her theory.

Both Arendt's and Schmitt's most important works are available in Hungarian, with the regrettable lack of a translation of *The Human Condition*. Arendtians mostly comment on various aspects of her thinking but Schmitt's concepts and ideas have inspired independent researches much like in other major Western countries. And similarly to the recent developments there, after the demise of Marxism or neo-Marxism as a common ground, it seems to me that Schmitt has become a remarkably popular author for both leftist (though not liberal) and rightist theorists. The state as the focal

point of political theory has been definitely replaced by the political as the point of ultimate reference.

It does seem that Schmitt's thinking has taken on a sort of an emancipatory function for political theory in general. Certain empirical theories that were discussed above (leader democracy, discourse analysis in the first place) also demonstrate the influence of Schmitt's conception of the political. Also, as I guessed above, the very combative nature of Hungarian politics, with deep animosities and sometimes hostilities between left and right, may have done much to prepare the rise of Schmitt's theory. Finally, I also think that his obsession with *the political* has got not only theoretical but methodological and sociological functions as well. It is not just the nature, boundaries, and meaning of politics but of political theory, too, that can exploit the notion. Schmitt helps political theorists to explain (but also to hide) what they do and who they are.

4.3. Normative theories

Normative political theory or political philosophy can also be done in a more analytical and in a more historical way. The former approach is strongly related to the analytical theories and focuses on problems, issues, concepts, phenomena that are identified as being in need of some action (promotion, defense, preservation, justification, prohibition, etc.) grounded in and guided by certain philosophical insights. The latter approach deals with solutions and answers developed or suggested by previous authors in relation to these issues, and usually presupposes a conception of a tradition in which they, that is, both the authors and their conceptions, make some coherent and actually meaningful sense. In a particular political community, this latter approach may itself be further specialised insofar as certain universal positions (liberalism, conservatism) may turn out to have special meanings within the particular political history of that community, or there may be particular ideological positions and their history that are not really compatible with any universal ideology (especially those related to national identity).

As far as I can tell, within analytical normative political theory the Hungarian landscape mirrors most of the positions well-known in the international arena, of course, with a number of local characteristics and with considerable changes in terms of their influence and power over the past twenty years. Let me briefly take stock with them.

(i) Egalitarian-Kantian liberalism was relatively strong in the nineties, its institutional stronghold (still) being the Central European University.²⁶ With the crisis of liberalism in Hungary after 1998 (when the Fidesz first won the elections), however, the characteristic issues of liberal philosophy – equality, justice, fairness – have practically disappeared from the wider academic discourse, human rights remaining perhaps the only topic that has preserved its prominence, again, mostly related to the activity of the Constitutional Court. Topics related to hate speech and generally to the freedom of speech were perhaps those that were both well-connected to the ongoing international debates and to the actual problems of the Hungarian polity. For otherwise liberal political philosophy, at least in my judgment, gradually lost its sensitivity towards the actual needs and concerns of the Hungarian society and became a somewhat barren and

doctrinaire moral creed. Those interested in the most abstract levels of philosophical discussion chose to publish in English rather than in Hungarian.

(ii) Communitarianism is also present, though it is known mainly to political theorists. Some original interpretations and contributions of communitarianism have been produced, influenced by Charles Taylor and Alasdair MacIntyre and others.²⁷ The call for a less individualistic political order has found some echo in the governing party that introduced the new Basic Law of the country in 2011. Without being able to support my claim with hard evidence, the sections of the Basic Law that promulgates basic rights *and duties* of citizens show clear signs of a communitarian position.

(iii) Libertarianism or classical liberalism, in Hungary mostly associated with Hayek and Mises, two Central European authors, was especially strong during the regime change. I still remember the influx of books by libertarian authors donated by various pro-market American organisations. Hayek, but not Mises, is accessible in Hungarian. Especially during the nineties, Michael Polanyi's works were also extensively translated. He began his career as a natural scientist and changed later to philosophy of knowledge and science. His thinking is not straightforwardly political but his concepts of personal knowledge, tacit knowledge, the impossibility of planned economy are both original and reminiscent of both Oakeshott's and Hayek's thinking.

Strangely enough, well-known contemporary libertarians of Hungarian origin such as Thomas Szasz, Anthony de Jasay and Tibor Machan are virtually unheard of in Hungary.²⁸ Since libertarianism is quite strongly rooted in economics and economic philosophy, I guess that its more profound and original reception would have required a more developed political economical background which was and is, however, still missing. Libertarianism is, thus, mostly represented by books, reviews, short notes, articles and it has, as I suppose it does in continental Europe elsewhere, a certain sectarian and doctrinaire ting. The recent economic crisis did much to further undermine the credibility of libertarianism, at least as it is interpreted by its critics, whereas libertarians who argue that the crisis resulted from state, rather than market, failures, are hardly heard.

(iv) Especially after 1998, the popularity of conservatism has been on the rise.²⁹ As is well-known, conservatives are more reluctant to identify themselves as conservatives than liberals as liberals, because of the less ideological and systematic thinking of conservatism which is, therefore, usually a more personal philosophy than liberalism and is often more critical than constructive. In any case, Burkean-Oakeshottean thinking has become pretty influential even among the younger, highly educated generation. Roger Scruton's personal involvement in Central European politics (he actively helped dissidents in the eighties and has a good knowledge of Polish, Czech, Hungarian philosophy as well) made him a sort of intellectual celebrity in Hungary, too, with a number of his books having been translated. His championship of national states vis-a-vis the European Union has become especially welcome in the Right.

Because of his Hungarian origin and interest in Hungarian affairs, John Kekes' influence is also notable. His more analytical and unhistorical approach to conservatism is truly unique in Hungary. Again, due to their Hungarian nativity, Thomas Molnar's and especially John Lukacs's traditional, somewhat religious-reactionary conservatism (which

are different, of course, in many aspects) is well-known. Their books have also been translated; Lukacs is especially widely read.

The perhaps most profound Hungarian-born conservative thinker of the twentieth century is Aurel Kolnai. He also left the country very early. His thinking is perhaps the most pregnantly political philosophical and reflects both a highly autonomous intellectual development and a remarkably original approach to conservatism and a critique of utopian thinking. In his student years he was involved in the bourgeois radical movement and never ceased to be interested in Hungarian political history. His staunch anti-communism, born during the first Communist dictatorship in 1919, preceded his conversion to conservatism in the forties that was accomplished during his stay in the US. His intellectual return to Hungary was, again, made possible by the regime change and some of his most important political philosophical works have been translated. He, too, has exerted some influence on the strengthening conservative political philosophy after the millenium.³⁰

Neoconservative thinking is, however, known mostly from second-hand sources and reviews. The exception is Leo Strauss whose conservatism is, of course, a debatable question.³¹ On the whole, it is arguable that the rise of the Right after 1998, and especially after 2002 that led to their landslide victory of the 2010 elections, was intellectually quite prepared at the Budapest universities where conservative thinking has exerted considerable influence on students interested in politics.

(v) Socialist-Marxist political philosophy was relatively strong during and after the regime change, as I explained earlier, but has almost disappeared in the past decade. Publications of socialist ideas and thinking was restricted to the journal *Eszmélet*. Here, again, the Hungarian origin of Istvan Meszaros has played a great role in making his magnum opus (*Beyond Capital: Toward a Theory of Transition*) attractive enough to be translated.³²

(vi) Other major positions such as republicanism or anarchism are, in the form of normative theories, practically unrepresented in Hungary. Worth mentioning are perhaps certain ultra-conservative circles, in certain ways similar to paleo-conservatism. By this term I mean those who criticise, even reject, democracy, favor strong monarchism and a more traditional, Platonist social order. One of their most respectable source of inspiration is Béla Hamvas, a truly unique thinker, who was a staunch opponent of Nazism/fascism, communism and liberalism alike. He did not, however, do proper political philosophy.

It is undeniable that the bulk of normative political theory is based on Anglo-Saxon sources as in many other political communities of the Western hemisphere. But as I have pointed out, Carl Schmitt and Jürgen Habermas, as well as German conservatism and liberalism are very much present in Hungarian political thinking.³³ Quite recently, there has been a growing awareness of French (and French-speaking) normative political thinking as well, though mostly in the form of translations (R. Aron, B. de Jouvenel, C. Lefort, P. Manent, Ch. Mouffe).

Let me repeat a point made above: especially in a small and relatively closed, internationally hardly notable political community much depends on the few personal relations that tie it to the international discourses. Kekes, Molnar, J. Lukacs, Hont, partly due to their native interest in Hungary, and others like Scruton or Habermas who have

shown some particular interest in the region, have usually exerted not only a personal but philosophically formative influence on Hungarian political philosophy.³⁴

Historical normative political philosophy is more concerned with the historical continuity and discontinuity, coherence and identity of the various positions and their interpretations based on classical texts. It is here that national traditions, local forms of universal ideologies are especially important. And as I argued, the history of political thought, both of its more universal and local versions, was researched quite extensively even at the dawn of the regime change in Hungary. Interest in authors long forgotten or never really studied was especially intensive after censorship was abolished. But the dominant approach has been, as I explained, a contextualist one.

Others acknowledge the significance of the contexts and of the thinking of political actors, yet maintain that just because both philosophies (and its different versions) are very rich and universal, they can serve as reliable proxies for evaluating the various political philosophical positions that had developed in Hungary over the two centuries. Further, strategic and constructive political thinking cannot be done without normative concepts, without some historical vision and practical philosophical sense. In other words, it is not the persons, nor the theorists but the ideas that appear and disappear in the writings of political thinkers (yes, not only of professional philosophers, but also of politicians, public intellectuals, novelists) that can and ought to be studied as forming a meaningful tradition and style of thinking: a political self, so to speak.

Needless to say that those who favor a more contextual approach usually mistrust such a normative approach questions. But this debate is, once again, a different issue. Those who defend historical normative political philosophy (including myself) may also acknowledge that, for instance, 19th century liberalism, may no longer be relevant in and for actual Hungarian liberalism. Even less so because Lajos Kossuth's national liberalism (of a Garibaldi-Mazzini-type) was very different from Count István Széchenyi's conservative-utilitarian liberalism; Baron József Eötvös's Tocquevillean-Millian liberalism was different from Baron Zsigmond Kemény's conservative-constitutional liberalism. However, the differences are still meaningful, and though many of the once-relevant emphases and issues (such as Hungary's role within the Habsburg Empire) are really outdated, they have shaped public attitudes, political thinking, cultural preferences and sensibilities profoundly.

No wonder, of course, that it is especially conservatives who relish in researching their own tradition, believing that traditions themselves have authoritative power. In the 19th century, straightforward conservatism was at the margins, but many of its attitudinal-emotional aspects are discernible in the best writings of the greatest Hungarian novelists. Social conservatism as a political ideological conception and program was elaborated and published by János Asbóth in 1875 in opposition to the doctrinaire, laissez faire liberalism dominant in the second half of the 19th century. Somewhat later the so-called bourgeois radicals, a group of social constructivists began to criticise the liberal consensus from the opposite angle, namely, because they perceived it as not only politically corrupt but intellectually outdated and provincial. After the First World War, liberalism had almost no more real defenders. However, its constitutional-parliamentarian sensibilities, style, and unwritten norms were preserved in practice to a surprising extent, as I explained earlier. German-French-Italian type of radical or

revolutionary conservatism, corporatism, fascism had its Hungarian followers but remained more contained by the political elite. Exploring these different positions and others was an old debt of Hungarian historians of political thought and consumed much energy during the past two decades.

Thus, apart from Eötvös's magnum opus published between 1851-54, it was only the 20th century that normative political theory in the strict sense became an autonomous subfield of political theory in Hungary, and distinguishable from the philosophically more inchoate thinking of novelists, politicians, social intellectuals.³⁵ Given the historical circumstances and the philosophical underdevelopment of the intellectual life of the country, truly autonomous Hungarian political thought could not begin until the regime change in 1989. However, in my view it still makes sense to assemble the pieces of earlier, context-bound political thinking that can be concatenated in a way that does not make traditions (liberal, socialist, or conservative) appear to be wholly arbitrary constructions but implicit, tacit, half-conscious, yet solid and reliable sources of political orientation even today.

5. Concluding Remarks

Given the nature of this paper, any conclusion to be drawn from the overview can be only rather personal. But since this Issue is meant to be, as far as I understand, about memories, I think this provides me with some liberty to summarise the development of political theory in Hungary by choosing and pointing out those aspects that I deem to have been the most relevant ones.

The first point is that political theory did not begin in the regime change, it flourished before the war, though it was essentially suppressed during the Communist dictatorship. Much effort has been devoted to unearth these traditions, much of which turned out to be quite useless in the postcommunist world, yet perhaps paradoxically, contributed to the revival of some old, often outlandish debates on national identity, Hungarianness, and historical responsibilities. The second point is, again, a paradox: the negotiated, elitist character of the regime change initially supported a consensual interpretation of democracy in and by political theory, but it also provoked a harsh elitist critique of the transition which, in turn, made consensual approaches to democracy in political theory sound rather hollow. Thirdly, and in accord with this, the liberal, Western-type consensus about the nature of the new political order had to face increasingly strong criticisms raised by the Right. Hence, contrary to many Western patterns where liberalism is still a fighting force (for greater equality, justice, and rights), Hungarian liberal political philosophy found itself defending the existing order, whereas many conservatives became very critical of it, to the point of accepting theories usually held in high esteem in the Western Left. But since the millenium, liberalism has undoubtedly been on a decline, whereas conservatism, with its peculiar leftist concerns, has been on the rise. Topics and issues in political theory discussed in academic and public fora have reflected these changes. Fourthly, the influence of Carl Schmitt and his understanding of politics has grown ever since the late nineties. Political theorists seem to have found that Schmitt's approach is a useful tool to entrench political science as an autonomous field among other social sciences. Further, his agonistic view of politics

appeared to be more congenial to Hungarian realities than any other rival theory. This gives further reasons why a more moral (Kantian-Rawlsian liberal) approach to political thinking has lost ground to the more realist schools of it. But it must also be noted that Schmitt's and the realists' increasing influence on contemporary political thinking is not restricted to Hungary. A growing number of articles and papers in international journals and reviews concerned with and discussing related issues testify to this. Fifthly, it must be stressed that an immense work of translations, commentaries, institution development has been done by political scientists and theorists. There has been, however, simply not enough resource to even touch upon serious issues such as legitimacy, types and processes of democracy, rule of law, separation of powers, sovereignty etc. to the required depth and degree. Finally, I would underline the importance of emigré Hungarians, the Lukács School, the Catholic-Conservative "School," and many individual scholars, including some Western philosophers as well, who, by their works but often personally, have helped Hungarian political theory to be connected with the international community and who, perhaps inadvertently, gave orientation and guidance to a small but very busy community of scholars.

Notes

¹ I am grateful to the anonymous reviewers of the Journal as well as to András Körösényi and András Láncki for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of the article.

² The first book I am aware of that inserts Hungary (as well as Poland and the Czech Republic) to a discussion of the history of political thought is Noel O'Sullivan in his *European Political Thought Since 1945* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004). He discusses István Bibó, Aurel Kolnai and Michael Polányi – see on them later.

³ The character of the Horthy regime is itself a contested issue. It even became an actual issue of political debates after the regime change. Following the logic of politics, being pro or against the Horthy regime in terms of its historical achievements and crimes has become a major dividing line between the left and the right (this is similar to the Spanish debates about the Franco regime). My own view is summed up in the main text. Let me spell it out in some more detail here. The regime was indeed authoritarian from a 19th century liberal point of view, as were many European post-war regimes, however, it was more democratic than its predecessor, though still falling short of the Swiss, British, Scandinavian and French standards considerably. Again, despite its authoritarian tendencies, it preserved a substantial amount of liberal manners and procedures, especially the parliamentary control over the government, and resisted both the Nazi and Fascist "reform" movements quite efficiently. The unforgivable crime it committed was giving more and more room to antisemitism, introducing antisemitic laws and finally, under German pressure yet evidently not without significant internal support, eradicating the Jewish population in the countryside.

⁴ For a discussions of Hungarian emigrant philosophers see Congdon (2001).

⁵ János Kornai (1980), *Economics of Shortage*. Amsterdam: North-Holland.

⁶ As a prominent example, see Heller, Fehér and Márkus (1983). The authors belong to the "Budapest School," that is, the disciplines of György Lukács. On this see Arato (1987); János Kis, György Bence, *On Being a Marxist: A Hungarian View* (<http://socialistregister.com/index.php/srv/article/view/5455/2354#.U6p7W0Db4Sk>); Kis (1987); and Tamás (1983, 1989). These books were, at least in my memory, the first autonomous

receptions of some contemporary Western political philosophical positions, liberalism, anarchism, and conservatism, respectively.

⁷ See Bibó (1991). His book on international relations (Bibó, 1976), inspired by the lessons he drew from the failures of Central European peace treaties, was published in English and received favorable criticism. Another collection of his essays is forthcoming by the title *The Art of Peacemaking, Selected Political Essays*. Iván Z. Dénes is probably the most authoritative interpreter of Bibó's oeuvre.

⁸ To be more precise, after the end of WWII there was, again, a considerable output of independent political thinking in Hungary that was shut down in 1948.

⁹ The best known author in this field in Hungary is the prolific and polemical social theorist, now one of the judges of the Constitutional Court, Béla Pokol, a disciple of N. Luhmann. His thinking was also heavily influenced by J. Habermas' theory of the public sphere. Being also well-versed in Gramsci's and Bourdieu's theories, he has developed a peculiar mixture of strong antiliberalism (criticising liberal democracy and the liberal establishment), anti-neoconservatism (criticising capitalism), without ever returning to a Marxist or socialist theory of society and economy.

¹⁰ For Foucault-inspired political history, see Rev (2005); Horvath and Szakolczai (1992); and Szakolczai (2003).

¹¹ Such as the monumental *The History of Political Thought*, edited by J. Cropsey and L. Strauss (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1987); see also Miller et al. (1991) and Canning (1996). József Bayer, András Láncki, Mátyás Bódig and Tamás Györffy produced their own versions of the history of political thought, tailored to the needs of Hungarian higher education.

¹² One of the first representative volumes on the emerging democracy written by native scholars was Szoboszlai (1992). Another important book was Bozóki, Körösenyi and Schöpflin (1992).

¹³ See Pakulski and Körösenyi (2012). Besides this book, András Körösenyi, the leading theorist of the topic, has published numerous articles on the concept in English and in Hungarian.

¹⁴ The institutional infrastructure of political science in Hungary is composed of the Institute of Political Science of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, with appr. 50 researchers (some of them part-time employed), ten university political science departments and institutions with appr. 120 professors (rough estimate), and four doctoral schools. There are other relevant departments, e.g. Public Policy, Regional Studies or International Relations Departments as well. Since Hungary preserved the Soviet system of the Academy supervising the different sciences and arts, the Political Science Committee, the members of which are elected by scholars holding a PhD, is considered the highest forum of political science. Finally, the Hungarian Association of Political Science is a broad umbrella civil organisation, having around 250 members.

¹⁵ Gábor Tóka and Zsolt Enyedi of the Central European University are perhaps the most frequently cited authors in this field.

¹⁶ Representative authors with chapters and articles in English and German are Attila Ágh, György Hajnal, György Jenei, Máté Szabó.

¹⁷ Márton Szabó is the founder of this school in Hungary (see, for instance, Szabó 2006).

¹⁸ An outstanding representative of parliament and elite research is Gabriella Ilonszki, with a number of books available in English (For a recent book, see Ilonszki, 2010). Network theory applied to elite research is represented by Balázs Vedres who has published papers with David Stark (for a several award-winning piece see Vedres and Stark, 2010); and with László Bruszt (see Bruszt, Stark and Vedres, 2006); and by Károly Takács, who also has a strong record of English papers on networks, trust, social theory.

¹⁹ See, for instance, Csanádi (2002, 2007).

²⁰ See for instance Bruszt and Stark (1998); Kornai (2008); and Bohle and Greskovits (2012). This latter book won the Stein Rokkan Prize in 2013.

²¹ Representatives of this research area with English papers are András Bozóki and András Körösenyi.

²² Political ideologies are also discussed in and by social theory. The boundaries are, of course, easy to cross. It is perhaps worth mentioning that one of the most influential discussions of conservatism in sociology was developed by Karl Mannheim, another Hungarian emigré.

²³ See Tokes (1996).

²⁴ Authors with English output on these questions include, among others, Mátyás Bódig, Tamás Györfi, András Jakab, Zoltán Miklósi, Zoltán Sente, and myself.

²⁵ Notable exceptions are János Frivaldszky and Péter Takács.

²⁶ Two journals may be considered as having a predilection toward liberalism, broadly understood: *Beszélő* (a monthly review, first published in 1981 in a samisdat form, since 2013 only an online publication) and *Fundamentum*, a quarterly journal, with a strong emphasis on human rights. For shorter essays and discussions, two printed weeklies, *ÉS* and *Magyar Narancs* are the most widely known forums. The most influential liberal political philosophers are perhaps János Kis and Zoltán Miklósi.

²⁷ A representative example is Ferenc Horkay-Hörcher (2000).

²⁸ Jasay's book on the state was translated. Actually, Ayn Rand and Hans-Hermann Hoppe are also available in Hungarian.

²⁹ The most influential conservative bi-monthly journal is the *Kommentár*. A more academic quarterly journal with a conservative mark is the *Századvég*, published online.

³⁰ It would exceed the limits of this analysis to explore the influence of religion and religious thinking on political philosophy but it is safe to make a brief suggestion about the strikingly close connection between conservative thinking and Catholicism. Molnar, Kolnai, J. Lukacs, M. Polanyi were not only nominally Catholic (in fact, except for Molnar, the three others were partly or entirely of Jewish extraction!) but practising Catholics, with Kolnai and Polanyi converting as adults.

³¹ His chief interpretator is András Láncki whose work has been strongly influenced by Strauss and who is the perhaps most widely known conservative political philosopher in Hungary.

³² The most known advocate of Marxism as a political philosophy in Hungary is Gáspár Miklós Tamás, a former dissident, first an anarcho-liberal, later an Oakeshottean conservative.

³³ István Balogh is doing original research on Rawls, Habermas and Otfried Höffe. German conservatism is discussed extensively in András Karácsony's books and papers.

³⁴ In May 2013, Roger Scruton held a public lecture at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, attended by the Prime Minister, too. In May 2014, Jürgen Habermas gave a talk at the Eötvös University (the PM wasn't there), both lecture rooms were packed with students and scholars.

³⁵ See Eötvös (1996). The book(s) appeared first in German and later in Hungarian. In terms of coherence, conception and philosophical sense, this book is the greatest and consummate work of the dominant version of 19th century liberalism in Hungary. Tocqueville's and Mill's influence on Eötvös' thinking is unmistakable.

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